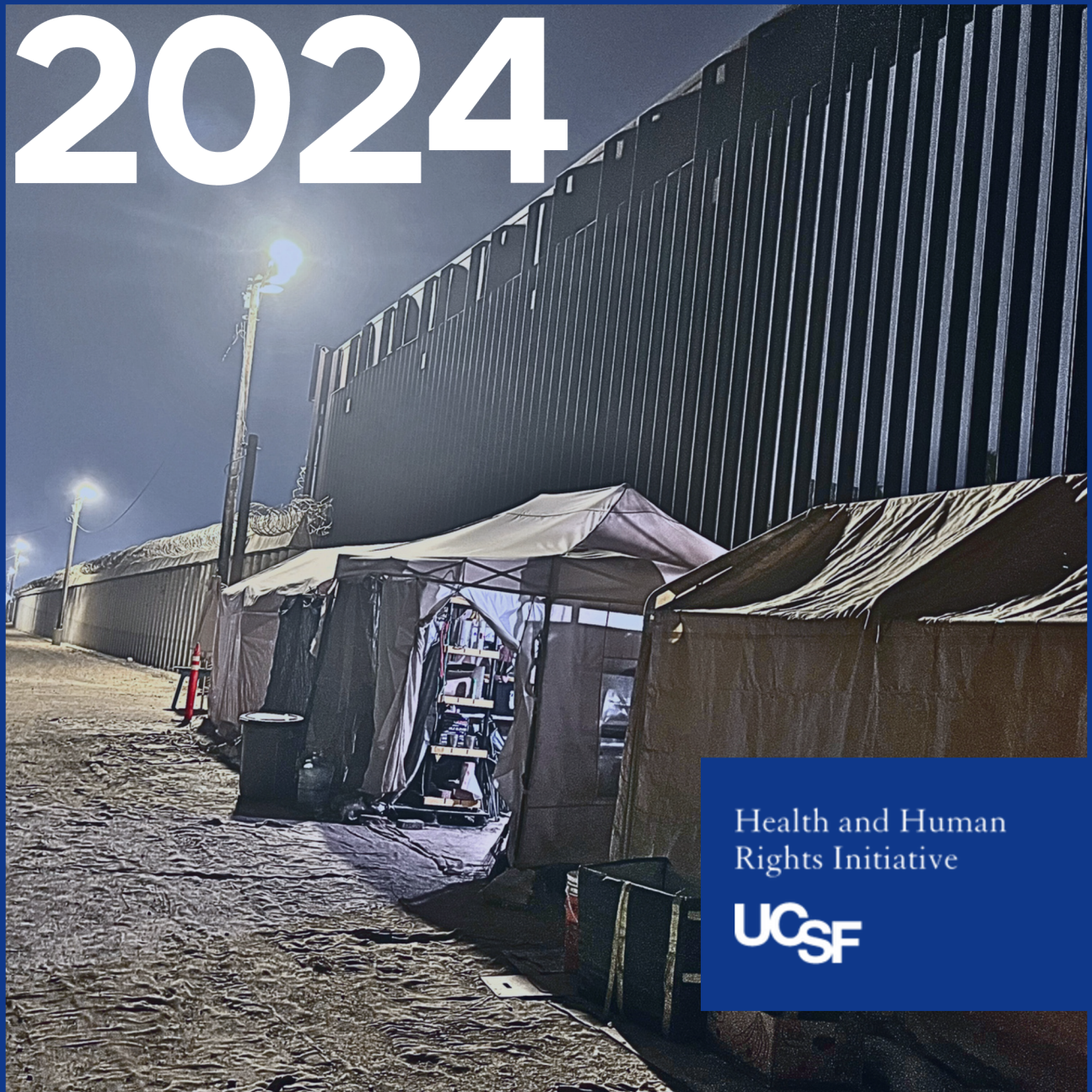


ANNUAL REPORT

2024



Health and Human
Rights Initiative

UCSF

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



TRIVENI DEFRIES, MD MPH

Executive Director

In this moment marked by uncertainty within immigrant communities, we are acutely reminded of why the work of the UCSF Health and Human Rights Initiative (HHRI) is critical to our clients, to our clinicians, and to our community. HHRI's mission is to uphold justice and equity for immigrant, asylee, and refugee families through science, education, capacity building, and research. Together, we can and will meet this moment with compassion and unwavering commitment.

HHRI's leadership team recently convened and reaffirmed its commitment and strategic preparedness to navigating a dynamic socio-political landscape in a way that is – as always – both client-centered and adaptive. As we stand in this uncertainty, we find direction by grounding in our truths – and what we know for sure is that we cannot do this alone! For this reason, we are building the capacity of clinicians and organizations with the skills and knowledge to deliver holistic services for vulnerable populations. Beyond UCSF, HHRI bridges to our wider community through capacity building with our city, state, national and international partnerships. We are proud to now be providing Office of Refugee Resettlement-funded technical assistance. And we are supporting and training providers within California, across the United States, and at the US-Mexico border so as to strengthen the many organizations providing vital services to our shared client population.

In community, we can create a world where every individual—regardless of their circumstances—is given the opportunity to thrive.

With gratitude and hope,

Dr. Triveni DeFries

Executive Director, Health and Human Rights Initiative

University of California, San Francisco



OVERVIEW

MISSION AND VISION

The mission of the multidisciplinary UCSF Health and Human Rights Initiative is to uphold justice and equity for immigrant, asylee, and refugee families through science, clinical training, capacity building, and research.

We envision a world where families fleeing persecution and injustices have access to care and resources they need to live a safe and fulfilling life.

KEY ORGANIZATION UPDATES - 2024

- HHRI is now part of the Institute of Global Health Sciences (IGHS), which works to improve health and reduce inequities locally and globally. IGHS is a champion and innovator in academic global health, with a deep commitment to improving the health of marginalized communities. HHRI and IGHS both work to solve global health problems so that people can live healthy, productive lives by:
 - Applying high-quality scientific evidence to inform health policies and practices
 - Training future leaders in global health
 - Building the capacity of our implementing partners
- We convened a leadership retreat in 2024 wherein we reaffirmed our commitment and values in responding to the evolving needs of immigrants and refugees in a climate of growing fear and conflict. We defined key priorities for the coming year in mapping and deepening our partner landscape and strengthening our mechanisms to harness the interest of UCSF and outside trainees and clinicians.
- We welcomed Cecilia Lipp, MA, MSL as HHRI Program Manager.

IMPACT AND PROGRAM

HUMAN RIGHTS COLLABORATIVES

We continue to operate our program offering pro bono medical and mental health evaluations to document human rights violations using international protocols. We have received over 1000 referrals from legal partners. HHRI clinician experts and trainees from Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Pediatrics, and Psychiatry conducted in person and virtual evaluations for 378 complex cases to date and 94 in 2024. We evaluated individuals fleeing persecution in their home countries due to their race, religion, indigenous identity, political opinion, sexual orientation, gender identity, intimate partner violence, gang violence, cartel violence and other forms of conflict. We track the legal outcomes of cases seen, and to date, for those cases adjudicated, 100% of clients have been granted legal protection in court.



CAPACITY BUILDING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- We started a 4-year grant “Supporting Trauma Affected Refugees” funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement with Partnerships for Trauma Recovery, a Bay Area-based mental health and case management. The goal is to increase the capacity of clinicians and services to deliver holistic services to trauma-impacted refugees.
- HHRI partnered with the Northern California Human Rights Clinic as well as Partnerships for Trauma Recovery to complete a community needs assessment of asylum seekers and their service providers in the Bay Area of California.
- We also continued our partnership with UC Law Center for Gender and Refugee Studies through the Immigrant Health Equity and Legal Partnerships (ImmHELP), a medical-legal collaboration of attorneys and health professionals where Drs. Gutierrez and Martinez represent HHRI.
- HHRI partnered with the UCSF Border Health Humanitarian Initiative to provide trauma-informed mental health trainings to *promotores* (community health workers) who work with migrants in border cities of Tijuana and Ciudad Jaurez, Mexico. Multilingual clinicians Drs. DeFries, Noriega, and Martinez developed and provided these trainings in Spanish.
- HHRI faculty Drs. DeFries, Gutierrez, Noor, and Marbin from the Departments of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics along with UCSF medical students travelled to Tijuana, Mexico to provide medical care in collaboration with Refugee Health Alliance to more than 113 adults and children across 3 migrant shelters.



EDUCATION AND TRAINING



We completed our 5th year of a UCSF Medical Student Elective with 25 students and 12 who have advanced as student coordinators of the Human Rights Collaborative.

We trained our 2nd physician in the 2nd year of the Health & Human Rights Track of the HEAL Global Health Fellowship. Both fellows are pictured here at the 2024 North American Refugee Health Conference in Minneapolis.

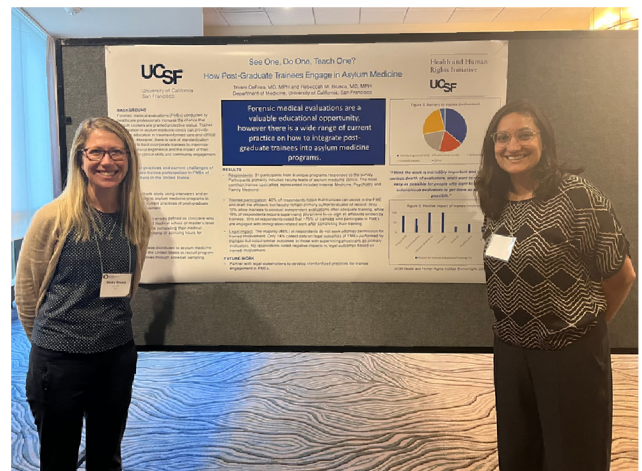
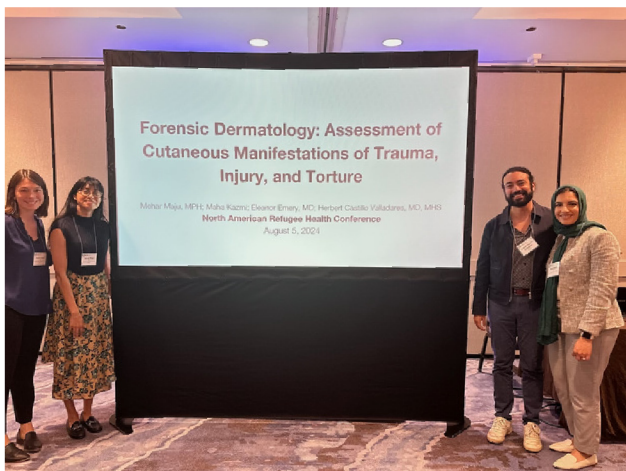
With support of the UCSF Academy of Medical Educators, we launched an interdisciplinary elective for 20 resident physicians entitled “Building Advocate not Walls: A resident elective in asylum medicine.”

Asylum Medicine Training Initiative: HHRI co-leads an open access, virtual training on forensic medical evaluations for asylum seekers that has now been accessed by more than 15,000 users from over 80 countries. We are conducting an evaluation of this large-scale training program and developing new content.

Global Health & Human Rights Webinar Series: We launched a new national webinar series with the Asylum Medicine Training Initiative in 2024, with over 250 registrants in the first four months! Topics have included: Immigration Law and Policy from 2024 In Review, Racist Intent: Understanding the US Immigration System, Evaluating Asylum Claims Based on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting Considerations for Mental Health Providers, Implications of Legal Status on Displaced Persons Health.

DISSEMINATION

HHRI published 2 peer-reviewed publications in 2025 and presented at the North American Refugee Health Conference, National Consortium of Torture Treatment Programs Annual Research Symposium, and in lectures and courses at UCSF and other universities.



PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

As we look to 2025, we are focused on the following areas of development to respond to the sociopolitical and health-related challenges facing populations experiencing “distress migration”.

1.) STRENGTHENING OUR CAPACITY AND QUALITY OF MEDICOLEGAL HUMAN RIGHTS EVALUATIONS

In response to a groundswell of need and interest to support immigrants, we plan to improve recruitment and onboarding of clinicians through a new volunteer portal and training management system. In addition to our established training programs, we will launch a new training program with the non-profit Immigrants Rising, mentoring undocumented mental health clinicians. We will create an advisory committee of community partners and legal and policy experts who can advise on how to best focus HHRI’s efforts.

2.) APPLYING TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

We will contribute to teaching in Syria’s first human rights violation documentation international fellowship through partnership with Dr. Kivlahan and the Syrian-American Medical Society. We will continue our work at the US-Mexico border, focusing on enhancing the capacity within Mexico and other countries of transit. We look forward to continuing with our international partners Physician for Human Rights and the Institute of Global Health Sciences, and collaborating on areas of growth in climate change and research.

3.) PURSUING GROWTH STRATEGIES

Bridging our California state partners and CalAIM technical assistance programs, we will work to develop navigation models for newcomer populations leveraging the community health worker reimbursement through MediCal. We will nurture individual donor relationships and expand law firm and attorney support for our programs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The services of our Human Rights Collaborative are made possible with the volunteer contributions of our student coordinators, clinicians (student, resident, fellows, faculty alike), through the support of grantmaking institutions - such as the ZSFGH Foundation, the Zellerbach Family Foundation, SF Office of Community Engagement and Immigrant Affairs, Haile T. Debas Academy of Medical Educators, the Wyss Foundation, and the Office of Refugee Resettlement, UCSF Latinx Center of Excellence, and our community partners. We extend our deepest appreciation to Dr. Suzanne Barakat, Camellia Latta, and Jessica Philbrook for their thought partnership as we work to enhance the sustainability of our funding. Thank you to our individual donors in 2024 whose generosity with gifts of all sizes bolster our work and brighten our spirits. We are empowered to continue steadfast in this work knowing that you stand with us in support of our clients.

The tremendous interest in HHRI trainings is a demonstration of the commitment of the individual clinicians within the UCSF ecosystem, and across the globe to the mission of our work. We express our appreciation to the many clinicians worldwide who have participated in the trainings through AMTI, the 150 UCSF affiliated clinicians trained through HHRI to date, 19 Residents in new 2024 elective, and 200 clinicians who registered in the first four months of the Global Health and Human Rights Speaker Series. Each of these clinicians has chosen to participate in these trainings without compensation for their time, and further use this training to provide pro bono services to clients seeking humanitarian protection.

In 2024 our Adult and Pediatric HRCs are made possible with the clinical expertise of UCSF faculty and affiliates: Naomi Adler, Celeste Allen, Amy Berlin, Julie Brichard, Jo Ellen Brainin Rodriguez, Becky Brusca, Cristina Biasetto, Colin Buzza, Triveni DeFries, Gabe Flaxman, Jess Ghannam, Raul Gutierrez, Andy Gross, Tammy Hoang, Jacob Izenberg, Marianna Kong, Arthur Lande, Zarin Noor, Suzanne Portnoy, Melanie Scharrer, Naomi Schapiro, Sara Scott, Emmeline Sun, Phillip Yang. Dr. Coleen Kivlahan, we thank you for your invaluable service as a mentor and for your resolute dependability as an evaluator. Many thanks to the incredible Medical Student Coordinators who coordinate the HRCs and to the dedicated UCSF IT team that supports HHRI's data management including Sergio Massuda, Remi Frazier, Danielle Stephens, Sai Venkatesh Nandigam.

While the work of documenting torture and other forms of ill-treatment can be arduous, the swell of great interest from our clinical community and donors in supporting this vulnerable population gives us all courage and strength. Your commitment demonstrates that - in community- we can find resilience.

OUR TEAM

With gratitude, we acknowledge the contributions of time and expertise that our **Leadership Team** devotes to HHRI. Each member of our Leadership Team provides hours of voluntary clinical service, professional development training, community capacity building work all out of a shared and heartfelt commitment to our clients. A multidisciplinary collaborative initiative like this one is made possible through the unwavering commitment of UCSF faculty's leadership. **We thank you for all you do!** We were also pleased to welcome faculty Jyothi Marbin, MD (Pediatrics) and Monica Noriega, PsyD (Psychiatry) to our programs activities this year, as well as Cecilia Lipp MSL MA (Institute of Global Health Sciences) as Program Manager. Special thanks to the Institute of Global Health Sciences, Rahwa Tareke in particular, for their unwavering support.



TRIVENI DEFRIES, MD, MPH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HHRI



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